829 474 467 in three of the 7,813 full-time farmers in both Islands at the time were even nominal members of either Union, one of which could claim to represent 25% of the farming population and the other only 6%[43].

829 469 As long as the farmers' Unions continue to represent only a minority of producers and to be divided among themselves there is little likelihood of their being able to benefit those in the industry. But the writer maintains that the grievances of the farmer today are not of the kind in which Union action could effect fundamental improvements because the position of the industry at present and at least in the immediate future depends on a policy of official benevolence. More precisely, this includes the range of financial, material and advisory assistance discussed above.

829 474 The farmer does however stand to make real gains from an efficient and popular co-operative movement. The present limited appeal of the co-operative system is a major drawback. In his interim report on the attitudes of the farming community, Fr. Cirillo observes that "the indifference and open hostility of the majority of farmers towards co-operatives can be partially explained by the fact that they are not able to give farmers the services which are expected of them....they are not in a position to operate as true marketing societies" (B/387, p.18). Fr. Cirillo also points to the mistrust of local co-operative organizers on the part of many farmers who have, moreover, never completely overcome their suspicion of the Government initiative behind the movement.

829 474 442 [426] It is clear that the system of marketing produce is the main weakness at present. Up to now most farmers have marketed their produce through a pitkal. This pitkal is a selling middleman who maintains a stall at one of the pitkali[1] centres at each of which is a Government-appointed clerk. The pitkal has also served a secondary function as a money lender to farmers who regularly deal with him. Fr. Cirillo observes that "many farmers would not join a co-operative society because of the fear that they might lose their pitkal's friendship" and "the farmer's dependence on the pitkal makes him look at the pitkal with respect" (B/387, pp.17-18). In 1957 it was proposed to centralise the marketing of produce through a single centre for the whole Island (B/253), but at least one of the farmers' Unions was quick to announce its opposition to the plan (B/54 - 11.6.1957, p.4). As on many parallel occasions the farmer was here faced with a choice:- between trusting the Union or 'Il-Gvern'. In most cases he would not venture to make his own decision on the matter.

matter. [P 65]

While the farmer does not favour the co-operative movement at present he is generally disatisfied also with the pitkal system and complains of the excessive profits being made by the pitkal, the sensal (a broker and transporter of produce) and the retailer. Very few do however venture to evade these middlemen completely by selling their produce directly to the consumer (B/387, p.17). This is probably the result in part of shortage of labour but in part also a reflection of the 'respect' in which the pitkal is held. The farmer is characteristically suspicious of any change in such a long-established part of his farming, even though he is loud with complaints of it.

The Government plan to centralize marketing on the one hand and to encourage the co-operative movement in the selling of produce on the other will not succeed without a great deal of patient education of the farmer supplemented by material incentives such as subsidies and other assistance already given in other aspects of agricultural development. The most successful co-operatives in Maltese farming to date are probably the two tractor co-operatives founded with the initiative and grant of free equipment by C.A.R.E. (Section 2). Here the farmer has seen a clear financial saving in plowing costs with no capital outlay on his part. He must similarly be persuaded that centralization and co-operatives in marketing would be to his advantage. Not only the farmers themselves but the consumers also would stand to benefit from a streamlining of marketing with grading and better packing and presentation of produce, while the improvements in Malta's position as an exporter of agricultural produce would fully justify the effort involved (B/253)[42].

YOUTH AND FARMING

In their pioneer investigation into the attitudes of the Maltese farmer Fr. Cirillo and his Royal University team stressed the crucial position of the younger generation in agriculture in the Islands (B/387). The present writer concurs with their views and considers the present retreat from farm and village as the most urgent problem in the industry. Something of the technical and economic background to this trend has been seen in Sections 2 and 3, but the social factors involved are no less important.

The fundamental contrast in outlook between the younger and older generations of the farming community today is that in the case of the older generation "with meagre opportunities in other occupations, and often

the money being repaid." Niklaws observes that "Farming depends on nature" and he points to the storms of late 1957 as an example of the way in which the farmer may suffer irreparable and unexpected loss. On this occasion standing crops, soil and field walls were washed away and the whole planting and sowing cycle interrupted.

The brothers also complain of the present marketing regime which, they claim, militates unfairly against the producing farmer. "There is no guaranteed market for field crops sold and there are too many middlemen taking too large a cut." The brothers cling to the typical idea in Maltese farming that the 'Government ought to guarantee sales of field-produce in the same way that milk sales are guaranteed'. They have little appreciation of ruling market conditions outside Malta. Niklaws says that the labour of the brothers is not considered as a cost - "if it were there would be no money left". They appear to have been in the habit of employing labour for many years and today have a full-time cow-hand. Only one of the brothers is married. Four of the brothers have therefore only themselves to support on their share in the income from this well-organized and apparently remunerative partnership, situated in one of the best dry-farming regions of Malta.

CASE VIII : Summary.

(Working partnership of five brothers with diversified production.)

A. Land.

c.70 tmien of unirrigated land in Żebbuġ Region. 16 field plots in 11 parcels in a linear arrangement extending over 2½ miles in the Żebbuġ and Wied tal-Lewż areas. All land lies in one of the best dry-farming regions of Malta on good marled Xero-rendzina and Carbonate Raw Soils.

B. Utilization. (i) Typical arrangement.

		Winter	Summer
Plot 1.	8½ tmien	Potatoes & Wheat	Tomatoes & Cauliflower
Plot 2.	1 tmien	Potatoes	Cattle exercise yard
Plot 3.	1½ tmien	Onions, Potatoes, Vines.	Legumes & Vines
Plot 4.	3 tmien	Potatoes & Vegetables.	Cauliflowers & Vegetables.
Plot 5.	2½ tmien	Sulla & Barley	Tomatoes
Plot 6.	1½ tmien	Cereals, Cauliflowers & Tomatoes	
Plot 7.	2 tmien	Wheat, Cauliflowers & Tomatoes	
Plot 8.	7½ tmien	Sulla	Cauliflowers & Tomatoes
		Cauliflowers, Wheat & Tomatoes	
Plot 9.	2 tmien	Vines	
Plot 10.	2½ tmien	Potatoes	Tomatoes & Cauliflower
Plot 11.	21 tmien	Vines (5½ tmien)	
		Barley	Sulla, Tomatoes
		Vetches	Fallow
Plot 12.	2½ tmien	Potatoes	Sulla
Plot 13.	1½ tmien	Wheat	Sulla, Vetches
Plot 14.	2½ tmien	Fallow, Melons, Tomatoes & Cauliflower	
Plot 15.	5½ tmien	Citrus Orchard	
		Tomatoes	
Plot 16.	1½ tmien	Cauliflower	Tomatoes

TABLE 7

	July[f] 57		Oct 57		Nov 57		Dec 57		Jan 58		Feb 58		May 58	
	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm
Sundays, Festas	4	4	4	4	6	6	7	7	6	6	5	5	7	7
Business, Valletta	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Repairs fields & buildings (storm)	.	.	2	4[1]	1	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
No work (storm)	.	.	7	7[g]	6	3	3	3	8	7	2	2	.	.[j]
Irrigation	8	8[j]	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	8	8[j]
Plowing	3	2	5	3	.	.	.	.[m]	3	3[n]	1	1	2	2
Planting, sowing	.	.	4	3	6	6	12	11[o]	7	8[p]	4	1	7	2
Working, etc.	5	3[c]	4	2	3	5	1	2	4	4	5	3	.	3
Cutting, reaping	8	8[d]	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2[q]	4	3[r]
Lifting potatoes	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	3[s]	3	3[t]
Threshing	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Loading, transporting	2	1	1	1	.	.	3	3	.	2	.	1	.	2
Vines, prune, graft	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6	7	.	.
Collecting hawix[e]	1	1	1	4	5	5[k]	3	4	1	.	.	3	.	2
Collecting seaweed			.	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.
	31	31	31	31	30	30	31	31	31	31	28	28	31	31

Notes

a. all potatoes.
b. potatoes 3.5.
c. hoeing, weeding, dressing, spraying, manuring, hoeing, etc.
d. wheat and barley 4.2.
e. hawix - general greenery for animal fodder.
f. data for other months not available.
g. the latter part of 1957 saw exceptional storms in Malta & Gozo.
h. the winter crop a month late on account of damp conditions.
i. the spring crop.
j. irrigation in dry months.
k. hawix gathering peak after 2 months of rain.
l. including 2.2 attending to animals (too wet to work fields).

E. Production and Sales.

(i) Main cash-crop irrigated potatoes - Arran Banner. Two crops - winter and 'early' crop, the latter for export. Yields vary considerably in spite of irrigation - winter crop 1956 double the quantity of the winter crop 1957. Soil conditions for cultivation and for germination can vary critically between November and February. Prices similarly vary considerably. 1956 - maximum price obtained 30/- per qantar. 1957 - April maximum price obtain 25/- per qantar. 1957 - May maximum price obtained 15/- per qantar.

(ii) Tomatoes. Pickings from May to October with peak production in July. Prices vary inversely with production (E/253). Irrigated local varieties only are grown. The best tomatoes are kept for seed, the next grade carefully selected for sale through 'pitkal' middleman for local market, the third grade sold to the tomato paste ('Kunserva') factory. Prices range from 10d. to 1/6d. per wizna, but vary with quantity available rather than with quality. Regarded as preferable to potatoes since the farmer believes they are less expensive to produce.

(iii) Artichokes. Irrigated perenniale producing for up to about 8 years. Best marketing period is during Lent. Great efforts made to raise a crop early in